

PARKGATE

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policy Summary

CHILD PROTECTION ETHOS

We in Parkgate Primary School have a responsibility for the safeguarding and child protection of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or harm to a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, “Co-operating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland” (DHSSPSNI, 2017), the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance “Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools” Circular 2017/04 (amended September 2019; updated June 2020) and the SBNI Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2017).

The following principles form the basis of our Child Protection Policy:

- The child or young person’s welfare is paramount;
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard;
- Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped stay together;
- Partnership;
- Prevention;
- Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances;
- Protection; and
- Evidence based and informed decision making.

2 OTHER RELATED POLICIES

The school has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions. The child protection policy therefore complements and supports a range of other school policies including:

- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Drugs
- Positive Behaviour Management
- Staff Code of Conduct

- Complaints
- Educational Visits
- Online Safety
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety
- Intimate Care
- Records Management
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Special Educational Needs
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling*

These policies are made available to parents of new admissions. Any parent wishing to have a copy should contact the School office on 028 93352888.

The following are members of the school's Safeguarding Team:

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| • Chair of the Board of Governors | Rev. S Simpson |
| • Designated Governor for Child Protection | Mr J McGrath |
| • Principal | Mrs V Ferguson |
| • Designated Teacher | Mrs V Ferguson |
| • Deputy Designated Teacher | Miss R Ramsey |

MEMBERS OF SCHOOL STAFF

- Members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures initially to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or to the Deputy Designated Teacher if she is not available.
- Class teachers should complete the Note of Concern if there are safeguarding concerns such as: poor attendance and punctuality, poor presentation, changed or unusual behaviour including self-harm and suicidal thoughts, deterioration in educational progress, discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child, concerns about pupil abuse or serious bullying and concerns about home circumstances including disclosures of domestic abuse.
- **Staff should not** give children a guarantee of total confidentiality regarding their disclosures, should not investigate nor should they ask leading questions

SUPPORT STAFF

- If any member of the support staff has concerns about a child or staff member, they should report these concerns to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher if she is not available. A detailed written record of the concerns will be made and any further necessary action will be taken.

PARENTS

The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child.

Parents can play their part in safeguarding by informing the school;

- If the child has a medical condition or educational need.
- If there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child.
- If there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name, change of parental responsibility.
- If there are any changes to arrangements about who brings their child to and from school.
- If their child is absent and should send in a note on the child's return to school. This assures the school that the parent/carer knows about the absence. More information on parental responsibility can be found on the EA website at: www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection

It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for the parent/carer.

DEFINITION OF HARM

(Co-operating to Safeguard Children and young People in Northern Ireland August 2017)

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals.

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm.

Harm can be caused by:

Sexual abuse
Emotional abuse
Physical abuse
Neglect
Exploitation

RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm¹.

HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE A CONCERN.

In Parkgate Primary School we aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of their child's development and well-being. Any concerns a parent may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner.

If a parent has a concern they can talk to the Class Teacher, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection.

If they are still concerned they may talk to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

At any time, a parent may talk to a social worker in the local Gateway team or to the PSNI Central Referral Unit. Details of who to contact are shown in the flowchart.

WHERE SCHOOL HAS CONCERNS OR HAS BEEN GIVEN INFORMATION ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF STAFF

In Parkgate Primary School if a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff will complete a Note of Concern and act promptly. **They will not investigate** - this is a matter for Social Services - but will discuss these concerns with the Designated Teacher or with the Deputy Designated Teacher if she is not available.

The Designated Teacher (Principal) will consult with other relevant staff always taking care to avoid due delay. If the Principal is not available, the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection will seek advice from the Education Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection. The Designated Teacher may also seek clarification from the child or young person, their parent/carer.

If a child protection referral is not required the school may consider other options including monitoring, signposting or referring to other support agencies e.g. Family Support Hub with parental consent and, where appropriate, with the child/young person's consent.

¹ Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016)
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland>

If a child protection referral is required, the Designated Teacher will seek consent from the parent/carer and/or the child {if they are competent to give this} unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm.

The Designated Teacher will phone the Gateway team and/or the PSNI and will submit a completed UNOCINI referral form.

Where appropriate the source of the concern will be informed of the action taken.

WHERE A COMPLAINT HAS BEEN MADE ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE BY A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL'S STAFF OR A VOLUNTEER

When a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff the Principal (or the Deputy Designated Teacher if the Principal is not available) must be informed immediately. If the complaint is against the Principal, then the Deputy Designated Teacher should be informed and she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will consider what action is required in consultation with the employing authority.

CONSENT

Prior to making a referral to Social Services the consent of the parent/carers and/or the young person (if they are competent to give this) will normally be sought. The exception to this is where to seek such consent would put that child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

In circumstances where the consent of the parent/carer and/or the young person has been sought and is withheld we will consider and where possible respect their wishes. However, our primary consideration must be the safety and welfare of the child and we will make a referral in cases where consent is withheld if we believe on the basis of the information available that it is in the best interests of the child/young person to do so.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "in confidence". In the interests of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies. In keeping with the principle of confidentiality, the sharing of information with school staff will be on a 'need to know' basis.

Where there have been, or are current, child protection concerns about a pupil who transfers to another school we will consider what information should be shared with the Designated Teacher in the receiving school.

Where it is necessary to safeguard children information will be shared with other statutory agencies in accordance with the requirements of this policy, the school Data Protection Policy and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

RECORD KEEPING

In accordance with DE guidance we must consider and develop clear guidelines for the recording, storage, retention and destruction of both manual and electronic records where they relate to child protection concerns.

In order to meet these requirements all child protection records, information and confidential notes concerning pupils in Parkgate Primary School are stored securely and only the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal have access to them. In accordance with DE guidance on the disposal of child protection records these records will be stored from child's date of birth plus 30 years.

If information is held electronically, whether on a PC, a laptop or on a portable memory device, all must be encrypted and appropriately password protected.

These notes or records should be factual, objective and include what was seen, said, heard or reported. They should include details of the place and time and who was present and should be given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence.

SAFE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

Vetting checks are a key preventative measure in preventing unsuitable individuals' access to children and vulnerable adults through the education system and schools must ensure that all persons on school property are vetted, inducted and supervised as appropriate. All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in Parkgate Primary School are vetted/supervised in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidance.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF - PAID OR UNPAID

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the child and young people in their charge must be above reproach. All members of staff are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers which has been approved by the Board of Governors.

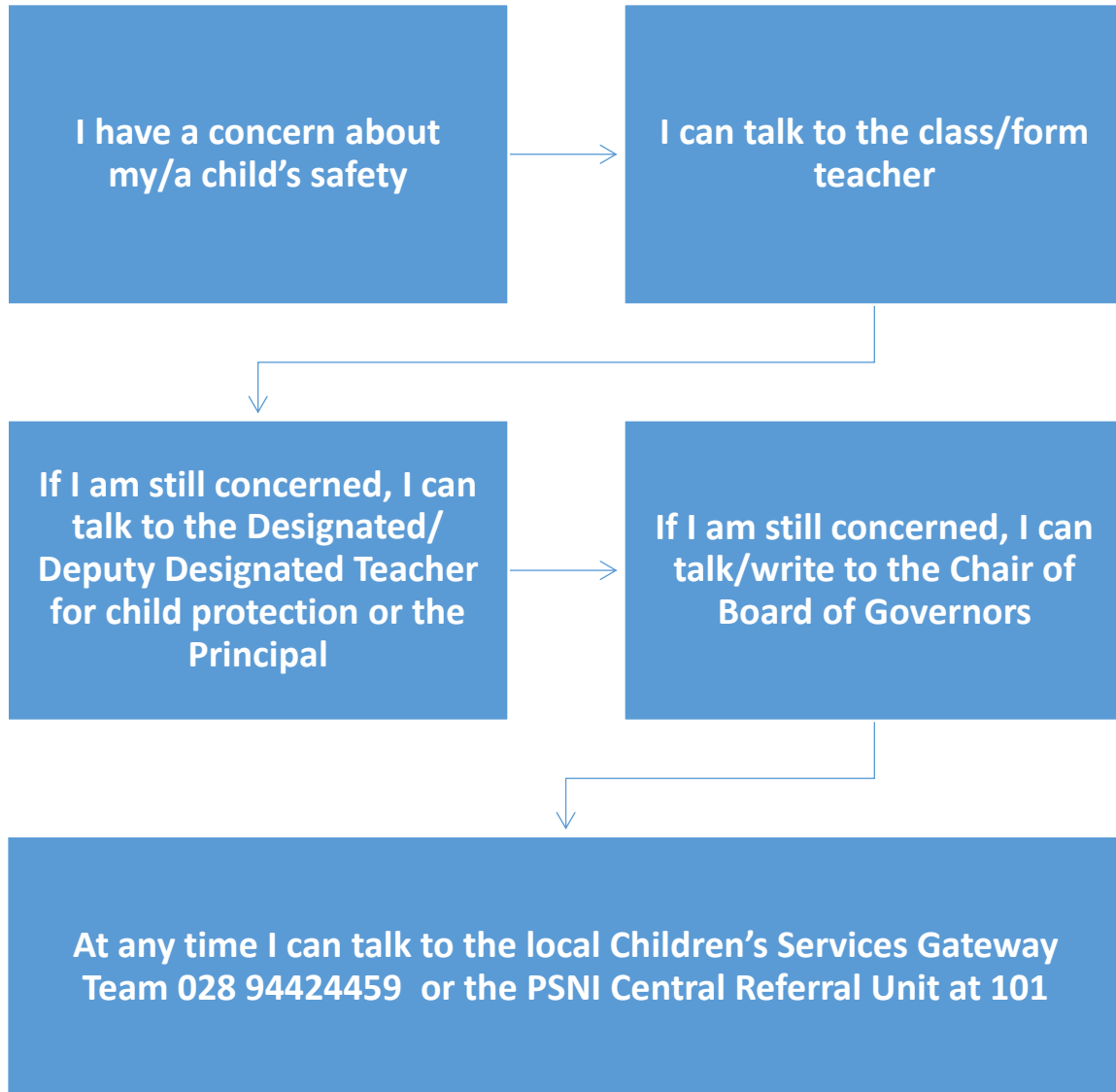
THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM

The statutory personal development curriculum requires schools to give specific attention to pupils' emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships, and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people in an age-appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours. (2017/04).

Our school seeks to promote pupils' awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, including those related to child protection through its curriculum. The safeguarding of children is an important focus in the school's personal development programme and is also addressed where it arises within the context of subjects. Through the preventative curriculum we aim to build the confidence, self-esteem and personal resiliencies of children so that they can develop coping strategies and can make more positive choices in a range of situations.

Throughout the school year child protection issues are addressed through class assemblies and there is a permanent child protection display in the main corridor and relevant information is displayed in each classroom, which provides child helpline numbers. The delivery of the preventative curriculum is supported by the expertise of outside agencies and visitors e.g. NI Fire Service, NSPCC. Parents/carers will be notified for their consent, prior to lessons/workshops which might contain sensitive language or issues.

If a Parent Has a Potential Child Protection Concern Within the School



If you have escalated your concern as set out in the above flowchart, and are of the view that it has not been addressed satisfactorily, you may revert to the school's Complaints Policy. This policy should culminate in the option for you to contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) who has the legislative power to investigate your complaint.

If a parent has a concern about a child's safety or suspects child abuse within the local community, it should be brought directly to the attention of the Children's Services Gateway Team.

DESIGNATED TEACHER	MRS V FERGUSON
DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER	MISS R RAMSEY
CHAIR OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS	REV. S SIMPSON

Procedure Where the School Has Concerns, or Has Been Given Information, about Possible Abuse by Someone Other Than a Member of Staff



SOME USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS: –

Designated Teacher - Mrs V Ferguson	Office	028 93352888
	Mobile	07860 703814
Northern Health & Social Care Trust:		0300 1234 333
PSNI Public Protection Unit:		028 9025 9299
Children's Services Gateway Team		028 94424459
The PSNI Central Referral Unit at		101

- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>
- <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>